

# Special Addition to THE INDEX

VOL 06-03/a

NOVEMBER, 2003

*Once again we could not fit all that is happening around town on one page..... Please take the time to read the informative interview of our new town planner, submitted by our local reporter on the streets, Ann Dorbin...*

## Trappe Community Dinner

**Trappe United Methodist Church**

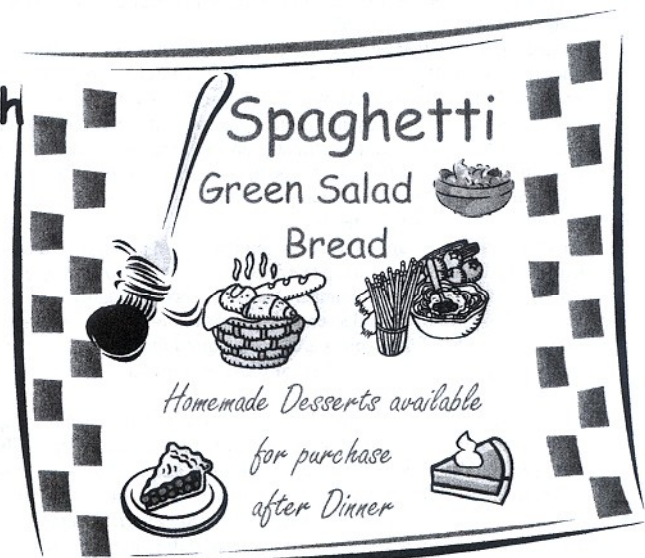
**Friday Nov. 7, 2003**

**6:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

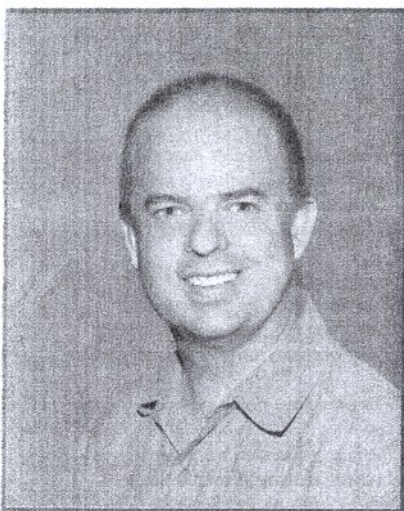
**Adults \$6 - Children \$4**



Sponsored by Town Employees  
All proceeds go towards Town  
Holiday Decorations  
Lights & Banners



*This will be the first of many more monthly town dinners being sponsored by local organizations...watch here for more feasts ... Let's dine together and celebrate our community!!!*



### **Frank Hall Hired as First Trappe Town Planner** By Ann E. Dorbin Trappe Correspondent

Frank V. Hall, former Assistant Planner for Talbot County, has been hired as the first Town Planner for the Town of Trappe. Hall grew up in Catonsville, Maryland, the son of a chemistry teacher and an English teacher. "So I could never get away with anything when it came to schoolwork," he admits. He graduated from Catonsville High School in 1984. He then spent four years in the Air Force, serving in the Philippines, Korea, and upstate New York from 1986 to 1990. In 1995, he graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County with a major in Urban Geography and Planning. His course of study included internships for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments in Washington, D.C. He then worked for the Maryland Department of the Environment and Greiner/URS Corporation, an international engineering and planning firm located in Hunt Valley, Maryland, prior to serving as Assistant Talbot County Planner for more than five years.

Trappe (population 1,146) is a small town that characterizes itself as having "19th Century Charm and 21st Century Progress." Situated along Route 50, midway between Easton and Cambridge, it is one of five incorporated towns in Talbot County. Like many towns and villages along the Eastern Shore, the town faces challenges in balancing the need for growth and development while maintaining its small town character, fiscal stability, and sound environmental practices.

In May of this year, in a controversial referendum vote, town residents came to the polls to show their support of a property annexation on the east side of Route 50, which brought 924 acres into town jurisdiction. This is one of the largest individual acquisitions in Talbot County. As a condition of the Annexation Agreement, a contract between the Town of Trappe and the contracted landowners, the developer, Rocks Engineering Company, is required to reimburse the Town for the salary of a Town Planner to be employed and paid by the Town of Trappe. "We have the right to hire

and fire whomever we feel is best for the position," says Cheryl Lewis, president of the Trappe Town Council. "So we oversee and control the position and determine if our wishes are being followed. We also depend on our attorneys' advice when dealing in all planning matters, which gives us a second check in all planning issues. This is the best way to conduct business and make sure the tax payers do not carry the burden."



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Hall says that his most important role as the new Town Planner is to "help the leadership and the citizens of this town accomplish the vision they have set forth. The dream is already built, the vision is in place. What has to happen next is the planning to help that vision become reality." This planning includes implementation of ordinances and laws that will guide developers, conservationists, and preservationists to achieve a joint vision. "You can't have one without the other," Hall explains.

Hall explains that the Town Council and the residents it serves are committed to retaining the focus of the village center. "The village center has always been the core of Trappe. The key is not to lose that focus. We don't want the large development on the east side of town to detract from the traditional community and neighborhood that Trappe has always been. One way to do that is to help improve the village concept in the town core through our existing Village Overlay zoning. Trappe has so many wonderful features. The corners come together in charming triangles of homes, antique stores, and small shops. These landmark corners and landscapes should be preserved and possibly redeveloped into something more economically viable for the town, so that Trappe will be a place where people come to shop, eat at a restaurant, or browse at antiques and art. We want people to come and hear the stories of the town; come and hear the story of Homerun Baker; come and hear the story of local artists. There is a lot of culture here that people don't see. Some of that can be brought to light by a community project that will help attract people here."

Hall believes that redevelopment can have a positive impact on the town. The town's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes community revitalization and the value of retaining the spirit of the existing rural community. "I don't think people see Trappe as a place that has much to offer culturally and historically," Hall says. "And they're wrong! In the very short time I have been here I've been blown away by the value this community has. That cannot be lost. Hopefully one of the things that I can do is to make sure that does not get overshadowed by the new development project."

Although Hall says he enjoyed his position with Talbot County, he welcomed the opportunity to help lead Trappe into a dynamic future. "I was very proud to come to Trappe, and here's why: planners very seldom get to be first at anything anymore. There's no more frontier to work with. What you have here in Trappe is the opportunity to be the first at something, which just doesn't happen any more. Ten or twenty years from now, Trappe is going to be something new; but it's still going to be something special."

Hall goes on to say that he was further inspired by the shared vision—of the elected body of the Town Council, the appointed body of the Planning Commission, and the town residents—for the town's future. "The citizenry had a shared vision for this town—with some opposition, which is healthy, you need that. The opposition wanted the public to have their input through a vote. They exercised their rights, and brought the annexation decision to a vote. That's very honorable, concerned citizens should participate in their government. That opposition took the annexation to referendum, and the referendum survived. So that told me now you have elected officials, appointed officials, and a citizenry that are committed to the vision. In addition, the vision survived the subsequent election for town commissioners. And lastly, we have a private sector investor committed to creating the vision. Obviously Rocks Engineering is in it for economic gain, but there is a value to the town in that business partnership as well. So we have all sectors—public, private, and citizenry—focused on something special in a place that is already special. How can you not be excited by that?!"

Besides village center and community revitalization projects, and economic development issue, Hall's time will also be spent overseeing and supervising the development of the annexed property. The Town is currently updating zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to support its existing Comprehensive Plan. These include Floating Zone and Planned Neighborhood ordinances. These will be guiding documents that will lead to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan through the development of so-called enabling legislation—future ordinances and laws that will allow the developer to bring forward a project for public presentation. Preliminary reviews of the project are also required for licensure of the sewer treatment plant upgrades, State Highway Administration approvals, environmental analysis, and engineering studies. "All of these entities have to work as a team to pull this off the right way," Hall says. "I'll be the hub of that collaboration."

In these times of increasing population and sprawl, words like *development*, *growth*, and *annexation* often have negative connotations, causing residents of small towns to dread ensuing congestion and loss of rural characteristics. These are issues that Hall believes can be avoided by proper planning. "It would be very helpful if people could stop looking at unit quantities, and start looking at quality. We have to get past looking at numbers and start looking at design." Using Easton as an example, he says that town has been annexed in an inconsistent, piecemeal fashion. "Take the Matthewstown Run subdivision—personally, I think it's inefficient land use. It's low density tract housing, it's grid pattern streets, it's backyards facing out. On the east side of Easton, you can't get anywhere without getting on Route 50—there's no permeability of a transportation network. It's just not done well. Easton grew piecemeal, and that is sprawl and it doesn't look very well."

"But you can't blame Easton," he adds, "because that's how the laws were written. People need to realize that when laws are on the books, and you just can't change them willy-nilly because you don't like something. The elected officials and planning commissions often have to live with the decisions that were made by their predecessors. Trappe's leadership saw what was happening in Easton, the piecemeal annexations and mismatched designs, and decided the best approach was to take on one large project, so we will have consistency in design and functionality in the transportation network. Years ago, Trappe's leadership was smart enough to say, 'If we're going to control this, and do it well, let's put a long-range strategy in place.' It's been very deliberate planning. Now they can have unified control over the town's future versus a piecemeal approach that may or may not fit."

Over the coming months, possibly at the December meeting, the Trappe Town Council will have their first opportunity to see Rocks Engineering's concept plans during a regular Town Meeting. Town Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month and are open to the public. Town ordinances require that developers of large planned unit development (PUD) projects present a conceptual proposal to the Town Council, which then grants authority to the Planning Commission to begin working on the nitty-gritty details and come up with a working plan for wastewater, road designs, and lot layout. The development will be done in phases, and there is no obligation on the town's part to accept any plan presented. The Town retains full capability to accept, reject, or amend any plan submitted to it.

Hall stresses that, "We urge all citizens to participate in this process—to come to Town Meetings, express your concerns, work on committees, and become involved in the future of the town. Realize that all of it is important, pro and con. God help us if it was all one way or another. I encourage residents to become stakeholders, to be informed and involved in issues that will impact your home and your town. That's what it's all about. Continue to attend Town Meetings—pack the house."

Lewis adds, "One of the reasons Frank was our person of choice was that we had watched him handle issues at the County level. We respected his ability to say something was right or wrong based on his education, knowledge, and reality. We are not looking for 'yes' people, we are looking for people who have knowledge and want to be part of our town's dream."

Frank Hall lives in Ridgely with his wife, Tina, who teaches autistic children, and their two children Typhannie (10) and Kimberly (7). He can be reached at the Trappe Town Hall at 410.476.3170 or by email at [frank@trappemd.net](mailto:frank@trappemd.net).



Thanks to Rose Palombo, owner of Trappe's new florist shop, Gardenstar Florals, for donating boutonnieres to the Easton High School Marching Band and Flag Corps for the homecoming football game last month.

### *From Canada*

*By Ann Dorbin*

*Listen to the geese as they fill the sky  
Each year around Thanksgiving  
Their wonderful, eerie cry  
Of long travels and forgiving*

*Watch as their wings beat out of sight  
At the urging of winter's breeze  
Continuing on in the steadfast flight  
Of their marvelous moving V's*

*Their voices echo over marsh and farm  
And the ear of the oyster tonger  
And when the sight of them is gone  
Their presence lingers longer*

*For they have flown to the edge of the sea  
Perhaps to heaven's doorway  
Leaving a promise and mystery  
On his life's rocky shoreway*

*Listen to the geese as they fill the sky  
Each year around Thanksgiving  
Calling their wonderful, eerie cry  
Of long travels and forgiving*